Coal ash causing pollution

3082. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need for setting up more coal washeries at pit heads so that ash content could be limited to an international standard of less than 18 per cent or so as reportedly suggested by the West Bengal Power Minister while inaugurating a conference on 'Coal Ash Problems and Prospect' organised by the newly formed Coal Ash Institute of India (CAII) in Calcutta;

(b) whether Government are also aware that coal supplied to Kolaghat Thermal Power Station contains 40 per cent ash on an laverage and that ash from the ash pond has potential of affecting human health as well as Agricultural productivity; and

(c) if so, what remedial measures Government propose to take or already suggested to newly set up coal washeries in the country; details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. To reduce the ash percentage of coal as per need of the consumer and their willingness to pay washing charges, Coal India Limited (CIL) has initiated steps for setting up of more pit-head coal washeries.

Two pit-head non-cocking coal washeries, one at Piparwar (Central Coalfields Limited) and the other at Bina (Northern Coalfields Limited) are under construction to supply beneficiated non-cocking coal to thermal power stations. CIL has proposed to set up more pit-head coal washeries for benefication of non-cocking coal under 'Build-Own-Operate' scheme in private sector for supply to thermal power stations.

The boilers of Kolaghat Thermal Power Station are designed to consume high ash content coal. Suitable environmental protection measures are to be taken by the power station to prevent the air-borne ash affecting human health and agricultural productivity.

Decline of coal production

3083. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of coal has declined during 1994-95 as compared to 1993-94;

(b) if so,the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) its likely effect on industries and power sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Coal production in the country during the year 94-95 has in fact increased. The coal production during 1994-95 was 253.81 million tonnes (Provisional) as against the actual production of 246.04 million tonnes during the year 1993-94, the growth rate being 3.1 per cent.

(c) Does not arise.

कोयला श्रमिकों के काम करने की खतरनाक परिस्थितियां

3084. **श्री अजीत जोगी :** क्या कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या देश में बड़ी संख्या में कोयला खान श्रमिक खतरनाक परिस्थितियों में काम कर रहे हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में सुरक्षा संबंधी और अन्य उपायों का ब्यौरा क्या है; और